

ARTICLE 202

URBAN LIFE

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202.0100 NEIGHBORHOOD UNIT PATTERN

STATUS - The Neighborhood Unit Pattern was developed by the City Plan Commission as part of the Master Plan at the same time as the general land use portion and was approved by the Mayor and adopted by Common Council in March 1948 (J.C.C., p. 499). Revisions to the land use portion of the Master Plan have resulted in amendments to the Neighborhood Unit Pattern.

202.0101 Neighborhoods and Communities

The structure of the city is more complicated than a map of undifferentiated streets suggests.

Although there is no particular form or pattern suggested by a view down an apparently endless street of houses, the city's homes are grouped together around schools, shopping centers, churches and other centers of local interest. These groupings sometimes take on place names by which an area is designated: Redford, Delray or Corktown. The designations may be deeply rooted in historic usage, or they may be names recently coined to designate a subdivision.

Similarly, the local areas may have well defined geographic limits such as a park, a highway, an industrial belt, a cemetery or other space which breaks the continuity of the living area. On the other hand subdivisions may, as in northwest Detroit, merge into each other and extend for miles without any perceptible break in the pattern.

Recognition and more precise designation of these local groupings is accepted in the Detroit Master Plan as valid and useful.

The neighborhoods and communities form a framework for determining the need and location of schools, playgrounds and other local facilities. Identification of local areas has the further social purpose of encouraging social organization within them, and of fostering a sense of common interests and purposes.

For the purposes of designating residential areas in the city, the City Plan Commission uses the term neighborhood for the area, usually a square mile or less, which serves as an elementary school district. A group of neighborhoods forming a high school district is referred to as a community.

202.0102 Definition, Area, Number of People, Boundaries

In the development of the Master Plan, the City Plan Commission has recognized that the heavily traveled surface thoroughfares are in fact formidable barriers to pedestrian movements of children and adults. For this reason, it was determined that these major thoroughfares should be used generally as neighborhood and elementary school district boundaries so that each neighborhood can be made an area within which pedestrian movement is relatively unbroken and safe.

Since the major thoroughfares for outlying areas occur at one mile intervals, and for inner areas somewhat closer, use of these thoroughfares as neighborhood boundaries generally leave a physical area one square mile or less.

A square mile, under current subdivision practice, and providing adequate space for schools, playgrounds and stores, contains area adequate for 3,000 to 3,600 homes. While the area for neighborhoods in the heart of the city is smaller, population density is generally higher so that the population per neighborhood is approximately the same.

From 2,500 to 3,500 families, there are normally 1,000 to 1,400 children of elementary school age of whom approximately 80% attend public school. This number is considered a satisfactory size for operation of a six-grade elementary school in Detroit.

The residential area of Detroit on this basis emerges as 155 neighborhoods or elementary school districts.

202.0103 Relation to Other Elements of the Master Plan

Since major thoroughfares are used generally as neighborhood boundaries, the neighborhood is a residential unit served by thoroughfares or freeways running along its borders. Neighborhoods are occasionally traversed by secondary thoroughfares carrying DSR coach lines, but through-traffic is otherwise unnecessary and to be generally discouraged from passing through the neighborhood.

Wherever pedestrian walkway systems are developed in neighborhoods, it is desirable to interconnect the major walkways to adjoining neighborhoods and districts. In cases where freeways are to be crossed, the major walkways should connect with the pedestrian bridges.

The neighborhood as a residential area is to be protected from industrial or commercial activities except those of incidental service to the neighborhood.

202.0104 Facilities Serving the Neighborhood

As a group of families, each neighborhood needs certain services and facilities. Some by their nature should be provided within the neighborhoods. Others may be accessible along adjacent thoroughfares. Wherever possible, both for economy, convenience, employment opportunities, and a more effective focus for the neighborhood, it is desirable that a local center containing commercial, institutional, and recreation facilities be developed in a central location.

Schools and playgrounds to be used by small children must be accessible within the distance they can walk in reasonable safety. The Master Plan specifies that each neighborhood should have an elementary school with a five to seven acre central playground. In addition, four smaller playgrounds within the four quarters are needed to serve the younger children.

Recently neighborhood organizations have proposed pedestrian walkway systems and greenways for their neighborhoods. The major walkways of this system should interconnect the local centers, such as schools, shopping areas and recreation facilities. Such a pedestrian system should complement all types of development, and give structure and form to the neighborhood.

As a starting point in the development of such a system, streets and alleys could be converted to greenways or walkways, evolving over time into a pedestrian circulation system independent of the vehicular circulation system.

Near the neighborhood, there should be a shopping center, library, junior high school and a community playfield. Also accessible to the neighborhood should be such community facilities as public service offices, a large park and high school.

202.0190 The Map

For current information see the map in the office of the City Plan Commission entitled Neighborhood Unit Pattern - Detroit Master Plan.

Each neighborhood in the Detroit Master Plan is designated by a letter and the community number. For example, the neighborhood bounded by Wyoming, Seven Mile, Livernois, McNichols is designated as "10 f."

The facilities within each neighborhood are also numbered. Number "1" is generally reserved for the elementary school, recreation center and central playground which occupy the same site. The Bagley School site in the above neighborhood, which is now used as a neighborhood recreation center and playground, is designated "10 f 1."

202.0200 COMMUNITY PATTERN

STATUS - The Community Pattern was developed by the City Plan Commission as part of the Master Plan at the same time as the general land use portion and was approved by the Mayor and adopted by Common Council in March 1948 (J.C.C., p. 499). Revisions to the land use portion of the Master Plan have resulted in amendments to the Community Pattern.

202.0201 Definitions, Size, Boundaries

The community in the Detroit Master Plan is a group of six to twelve neighborhoods forming a residential area which is more or less self-contained with respect to everyday life and services of government which can be decentralized into branch offices. The community is intended as a service district for a high school.

The Community Pattern gives a more explicit definition to divisions of the city which today are recognizable physical entities and which contain special forces binding them together.

The high school, the public library and other decentralized services of government operate within definable geographic areas and their names are frequently used to designate that part of the city.

A shopping center with a weekly newspaper exists primarily as a commercial relationship, but the community newspaper often becomes a spokesman for other aspirations of the community. Women's clubs, luncheon clubs, service organizations and community councils often become the instruments through which local identity and interests are expressed.

The boundaries of the community are usually physical barriers or open spaces such as large parks, industrial corridors or freeways. Community boundaries have been located to give maximum recognition to those major physical obstructions and separations which are already present in the city. Similarly, the pattern attempts to keep the community itself a compact residential area unbroken by major physical separators.

Potential population of the communities in the Master Plan ranges from 50,000 to 150,000 persons.

202.0202 Relationship to Other Elements of the Plan

The community is a compact residential area which should be provided with all necessary commercial and government facilities, but protected from heavy industry and similar activities which might impair it as a living area.

In order to have opportunities for employment near each community and reduce the necessity for long trips to work, the future general land use map has been drawn so that there is an industrial corridor along the borders of or near each community. Similarly, it is desirable to have large parks within twenty minutes travel time of all homes. Consequently, new large parks should be placed along the borders of the communities.

Freeways should be routed, insofar as possible, in the corridors between communities where they can give ready access to all other communities in the metropolitan area and to the major service/employment districts.

202.0203 Public Service Facilities Within the Community

According to the Plan, each community has high and junior high schools, playfields and other recreation facilities, libraries, shopping and other public and private facilities needed by its people.

Some facilities such as the high schools and administrative offices serve the whole community. In a central location usually adjacent to the major shopping center, the map shows a location suitable for grouping public service offices and buildings. These minor civic centers are considered suitable locations not only for municipal services such as health, welfare, and police stations, but also for employment services, post offices, branch offices of the Secretary of State and similar services operated by the county, state or federal government.

The locations for minor civic groups are near intersections of thoroughfares where they will be most accessible to the whole community. Generally, they are adjacent to the principal shopping center of the community.

Sites designated for minor groups are areas large enough to accommodate three or four public buildings together with parking.

Facilities such as the junior high school, playfield, branch library, and the shopping center usually have a service radius smaller than an entire community. Since the junior high school, playfield and library usually serve four neighborhoods, it has frequently been possible to pick locations where these facilities can be conveniently near each other.

202.0290 The Map

For current information see the map in the office of the City Plan Commission entitled Community Pattern - Detroit Master Plan.

There are sixteen communities in the Detroit Master Plan. For convenience, the communities are numbered from 1 to 16. Facilities within each community, except neighborhood facilities, are designated by two numbers separated by a hyphen: "2-6". The first numeral refers to the community in which the facility is located. The second distinguishes the site of facilities within the community. In general, the suffix 1 has been reserved for community civic center site. For example, "5-1," "6-1," and "7-1" indicate sites which are within a governmental center on the map.